Meet the heritage trainees behind the RAF



Brendan and Baljit at the First World War exhibition

Volunteers and trainees are at the heart of so many HLF-funded projects. In fact, money raised by National Lottery players has enabled more than 4,000 people take their first step on the heritage career ladder through paid traineeships.

Baljit Singh Badesha and Brendan O'Gorman are Apprentice Aircraft/Vehicle Conservation Technicians at the RAF Museum in Hendon. They played a pivotal role in the development of the First World War in the Air exhibition and are working towards becoming qualified Conservation Technicians. Here, Brendan describes their experiences as heritage apprentices.

What do your jobs involve?

"Our main responsibility is to maintain the vehicles and aircraft at the museum. Each aircraft is scheduled for an in-depth inspection every three months, together with daily checks – there are 104 so it's a big job! The First World War in the Air exhibition has meant we've moved a lot of exhibits recently. Dismantling aircraft, especially those of national heritage and importance, can be a daunting task however there is a dedicated team of conservation technicians who we work with at both the London and Cosford sites. The whole process can take many months to complete as there are strict guidelines on maintaining the aircraft, conducting research prior to their dismantling as well as overall health and

safety.

"We're often working on the aircraft in public areas and routinely answer some of the more common questions from the public. The museum also has a specialist department of research who receive hundreds of more specific questions from the public, and we will often assist them in accessing aircraft to photograph or view serial numbers. One of the most popular events we are involved in is the Open Cockpit days which give the public access to our Avro Vulcan."

What have been your highlights so far?

"We've been involved in the First World War exhibition since the beginning so it was a proud moment to see it officially open last month, and of course meeting the Duke of Edinburgh was another highlight!"

What are your next steps?

"We've already achieved our Vehicle Maintenance and Repair qualification and developed skills and experience which will help so much in our future careers. We've still got a year and a bit left here but afterwards I'm planning to join the Royal Marines as a vehicle mechanic and Baliit is planning to stay on at the museum to develop his career here."



Prince Philip Duke of Edinburgh looks around the exhibition RAF Museum



new First World War exhibition

The evolution of flight and the First World War